



TERRA LAWSON-REMER

VICE-CHAIR

**SUPERVISOR, THIRD DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: January 23, 2024

14

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSITION 1, REBUILDING CALIFORNIA'S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

Mental illness affects 1 in 5 people in the United States. Without treatment, individuals with severe mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse are more susceptible to becoming unemployed, homeless, inappropriately incarcerated, and experiencing poor quality of life. Some of the most severe cases of mental illness can result in suicide or death.

Locally, in San Diego County, overdose deaths rose and nearly doubled over a four-year stretch between 2018 and 2022. These statistics reflect a system that doesn't respond to the needs of our residents, until they are in crisis. Over the last three years, the County has taken unprecedented action to invest in behavioral health staffing, prevention, diversion, and long-term community support for our most vulnerable, but we need more resources to help unwind the decades of poor decision-making regarding mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness.

In decades past, California shut down many state hospitals for people with severe mental health challenges without adequately funding community-based services to serve these individuals. For the first time in decades, with Proposition 1 "Treatment not Tents," Californians will have a direct line to transform and rebuild our mental health system and modernize programs to meet the needs of our communities.

If passed, Proposition 1 "Treatment not Tents," will refocus billions of dollars in existing funds to prioritize individuals that have the greatest mental health needs, are living in encampments, or suffering from substance abuse issues. It will help to build 11,150 new treatment beds and supportive housing, create 26,700 outpatient treatment slots, and set aside \$1 billion for veteran housing along with recruiting and training of 65,000 mental health workers.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSITION 1, REBUILDING CALIFORNIA’S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM (DISTRICTS: ALL)

VICE-CHAIR TERRA LAWSON-REMER

1. Adopt the Resolution titled: A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSITION 1, REBUILDING CALIFORNIA’S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Since 2021 County of San Diego has taken a proactive approach to address the behavioral health needs of our communities, especially our most vulnerable populations including youth, seniors and people experiencing homelessness. We have launched Countywide Clinician-led Mobile Crisis Response Teams and doubled our County Crisis Stabilization Units. On October 1, 2023, San Diego County became one of seven Cohort One counties to implement the CARE Act, which provides community-based behavioral health services and supports to Californians living with untreated schizophrenia spectrum or other psychotic disorders through a new civil court process. By January 1st, 2025, we must launch SB43 reforms to conservatorship. All these efforts aim to serve and protect our most vulnerable communities. The passage of Prop 1 will help ensure we have the resources and infrastructure to implement these programs effectively and care for our communities.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed item contributes to the County of San Diego’s Sustainability Goals by prioritizing the long-term health, safety, and well-being of San Diego residents through support for actions that will help get mental health services to those that need them.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts associated with today’s recommendations. There will be no change in General Fund costs and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

Millions of people in the United States are impacted by mental illness every single year and approximately 1 in 5 individuals will experience mental illness in their lifetime. Yet, over half of those individuals go untreated. Without treatment, individuals with severe mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse are more susceptible to becoming unemployed, homeless, inappropriately incarcerated, and experiencing poor quality of life. Some of the most severe cases of mental illness can result in suicide or death.

San Diego County is experiencing a homelessness crisis and roughly 40% of this unhoused population is experiencing some type of mental health illness. For individuals who do not have resources or access to care, the impacts can be staggering. Many fall into cycles of going untreated. In addition, decades of inaction led to overdose deaths nearly doubling over a 4-year stretch between 2018 and 2022.

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These statistics reflect a system that doesn’t respond to the needs of our community, until it is in crisis. It is imperative that the County support long-term solutions moving from a crisis model to care. Instead of waiting for individuals to become ill, it should work toward front end services that meet people where they are at, and get people help before their health issues have exacerbated at an extreme cost to both the individual and the taxpayer.

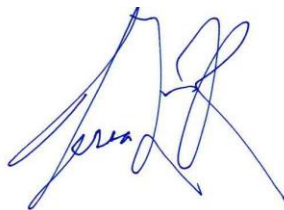
In decades past, California shut down many state hospitals for people with severe mental health challenges without adequately funding community-based services to serve these individuals. For the first time in decades, Californians will have a direct opportunity to transform and rebuild our mental health system and modernize programs to meet the needs of our communities. If passed, Proposition 1 “Treatment not Tents,” will refocus billions of dollars in existing funds to prioritize individuals that have the greatest mental health needs, are living in encampments, or suffering from substance abuse issues. It will help to build 11,150 new treatment beds and supportive housing, create 26,700 outpatient treatment slots, and set aside \$1 billion for veteran housing along with recruiting and training of 65,000 mental health workers.

The item today supports action to take critical steps in mitigating the mental health crisis, investing in community services, getting homeless individuals off the streets, and supporting our mental and behavioral healthcare workers.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today’s proposed action to adopt a resolution in support of a California State behavioral health bond reform measure support the Equity, Empower, and Community Strategic Initiatives within the County of San Diego’s 2024-2029 Strategic Plan by working to expand community care, reforming the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) to include funding for mental health and addiction services, and help to fund behavioral health workforce development.

Respectfully submitted,



TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Supervisor, Third District

ATTACHMENT(S)

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSITION 1, REBUILDING CALIFORNIA’S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM